

Serial No. 10/699,964

Attorney Ref. REO 001P

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification as follows:

Correct the second paragraph in the BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

A somewhat common way for an individual to correct the lack of sufficient friction is to moisten his or her paper-handling finger tip with saliva. This procedure may be unsanitary and, for many people, not polite. A more sanitary and acceptable means to correct this low friction problem is to place a molded finger tip cover over the end of the finger. Molded finger tip covers have been commercially available for a long time. Known molded finger tip covers are typically made of a high-friction synthetic or natural material and are formed with a pattern of protuberances on the outer surface thereof. However, these molded finger tip covers have the drawback that the cavity into which one places one's finger is fixed in size, thus, one size does not fit all, being loose for some and constrictive for others. A second drawback is that the molded finger tip cover, even if it is properly sized, when worn for some time tends to be uncomfortable and often sweaty. A third drawback is that the molded finger tip cover is not adaptable if the user has finger nails that extend ~~b-yond~~ beyond the tip of the finger.

Correct the BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS as follows:

Figure 1A is a plan view of a second embodiment of the paper handling aid of the ~~pr-e-nt~~ present invention.

Figure 2 is a cross sectional view of the first embodiment of ~~th-pap-r~~ the paper handling aid of Figure 1 taken in ~~th~~ the direction of line 2 - 2 thereof.

Correct the DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS as follows:

(001) As generally described above, a paper handling aid 10 is illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 according to the first preferred embodiment of the invention. Paper handling aid 10 comprises a substantially planar base membrane 20 having an array of

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protuberances 22 formed on a first surface thereof. Protuberances 22 are substantially equal in height as measured from the first surface of membrane 20. The height of protuberances 22 is left to the discretion of the designer and is, for example, 0.6 mm (0.025 inches). Protuberances 22 further assist the user in separating and lifting the edges of paper sheets being sorted or otherwise handled. Base membrane 20 and protuberances 22 are formed, for example, by injection molding or casting, from a flexible, elastomeric material characterized by a relatively high coefficient of friction against paper. The coefficient of friction against paper is preferably in the range of from 0.50 - 0.90, and more preferably approximately 0.85. Examples of elastomeric materials of which the paper handling aid of the invention may be formed are latex rubber and polyurethane resin. A coating of an adhesive 24 is applied to a second surface of base membrane 20, opposed to the first surface on which protuberances 22 are formed. Adhesive layer 24 is illustrated by dashed lines for reasons of clarity. The applied adhesive 24 is formulated so as to adhere substantially permanently to base membrane 20 and to adhere releasably to the skin of a ~~us-r~~ user. In particular, when paper handling aid 10 is removed from the skin, no residue of adhesive 24 remains on the skin. Preferably, adhesive 24 is hypo-allergenic so as not to cause irritation of the skin which it contacts. ~~Adh-sive~~ Adhesive 24 is also formulated to be ~~capabl~~ capable of ~~multipl~~ multiple uses, that is, ~~pap-r~~ paper handling aid 10 may be applied to and removed from the skin of the user multiple times. An adhesive that is hypo-allergenic and serves the requirements of the present invention is designated as No. 597 by MACTac Division of Bemis Corporation.

(003) Referring now to Figure 3, a specimen of paper handling aid 10 according to the first embodiment of the invention is shown applied adhesively to the pad portion of the left index finger F of a user with adhesive 24 in contact with the user's skin. The term "pad portion" of the finger refers to the soft tissue portion that is opposed to the fingernail. Paper handling aid 10 is flexible so as to conform to the shape of the user's

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finger. As will be apparent, while the task for which paper handling aid 10 is intended involves handling, sorting or separating sheets of paper, the user is able to contemporaneously perform related tasks, e.g. computer typing, hand writing, calculating, etc., without interference from applied paper handling aid 10. It is within the scope of the invention to apply paper handling aid 10 to any finger of the user, according to the individual's preference and the task being performed. For example, it is believed to be somewhat more convenient to apply paper handling aid 10 to the fourth finger (ring finger) if the user is writing with a pen or pencil during the task of paper handling. Paper handling aid 10 has been found not to interfere when the ~~s-condary~~ secondary task involves typing or use of a calculator. It is to ~~b~~ be noted that paper handling aid 10 does not enclose the tip of finger F, so as to prevent significant heat build-up or constriction and discomfort that often occurs when using the finger tip ~~cov-rs~~ covers of the prior art. In addition, paper handling aid 10 of the invention does not ~~int-rfere~~ interfere with extended length ~~fin-g-nails~~ fingernails of th the user, if present.